

VZCZCXYZ0354  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHVJ #0507/01 0781744  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 181744Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8070  
INFO RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0077  
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 0284  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0043

C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 000507

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EUR FOR DICARLO, EUR/SCE (HOH, FOOKS, STINCHCOMB), EUR/RPM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [BK](#)  
SUBJECT: BOSNIA - OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL PROCLAIMS  
NUETRALITY ON RS SECESSION

Classified By: DCM Judith B. Cefkin. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph four below.

12. (SBU) OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, who is on two-day visit to Bosnia, made several unhelpful comments to the press about the possible secession of Republika Srpska. The comments appeared in the March 18 edition of the main Bosniak daily, Dnevni Avaz. Asked for his views about "voices for secession" in the RS growing "louder and louder," de Brichambaut replied, "The "beauty of a democratic country is that its citizens can say what they think and can decide which politician to trust. Some important decisions need to be checked with citizens before a decision is made." In a follow-up question asking whether he supported RS secession, de Brichambaut added, "I am totally neutral. That is none of my business. That is a decision that is connected with the political process in a country." Recovering somewhat, de Brichambaut concluded, "All I can say is that if that continues, there would be consequences for Bosnia and Herzegovina."

13. (C) We queried OSCE about de Brichambaut's comments. OSCE officials confirmed that he was quoted accurately in the press but had misunderstood the question. The Secretary General is in Banja Luka today, and OSCE officials plan another press opportunity to "clarify" his remarks. We welcome OSCE plans to do so.

Action Request  
-----

14. (C) With this in mind, we believe it would be useful for USOSCE to be instructed to make clear U.S. views about the rhetoric and claims made by the RS government and senior RS officials over the last several week at the March 19 meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council. The following are points that we recommend be drawn from in framing a U.S. intervention:

RS Claims to Self-Determination and RS Secession:

-- The statements and actions Republika Srpska officials and government bodies, in the past few months in particular, has given cause for concern to the U.S.

-- The February 21 Republika Srpska National Assembly resolution asserted that international community recognition of an independent Kosovo has created a new right for the RS to self-determination.

-- This claim followed equally provocative statements in the

January 26 Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)  
Main Board conclusions implying that the RS already enjoyed  
the right to secede under Dayton

-- We want to make clear that the U.S. rejects RS claims that  
the RS can secede from Bosnia. There can be no referendum on  
secession, there can be no secession.

-- We have made clear to the leaders of the RS that we  
consider the RSNA resolution anti-Dayton, unconstitutional,  
and unacceptable. This is a message RS officials should hear  
from all OSCE countries and officials.

-- Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized by the international  
community in April 1992. It is not a Dayton construct. The  
entities, including Republika Srpska, have no existence  
outside BiH.

If Raised - Abolition of Entities:

-- We accept Dayton, which established the two entities. We  
reject politically irresponsible calls for the unilateral  
abolition of those entities, and we have publicly criticized  
them in the past.

-- Nonetheless, these calls do not provide a justification  
for RS claims that it enjoys the right to self-determination.  
RS leaders know that the Dayton Constitution contains the  
necessary protections for them to block any proposal to  
change the constitution and alter Bosnia's current two entity  
structure.

-- Rather than use their positions to responsibly remind  
their constituents of these protections, RS leaders have  
chosen to deliberately stoke their constituents fears by  
making irresponsible statements about an assault on the RS

that is not going to and cannot happen.

Comment

-----

15. (C) While we accept OSCE's explanation that Secretary  
General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut had misunderstood  
questions about a possible RS secession referendum, his  
comments were unhelpful and ill-timed. Despite his message  
that the RS would face consequences were it to pursue a  
referendum on secession and his plans to correct the record,  
we fear that politicians and the public alike would conclude  
that a segment of the international community does not care  
if a referendum takes place in the RS. This is exactly the  
wrong kind of message to send to Bosnia at a time when RS  
Prime Minister Milorad Dodik and other Bosnian Serb  
politicians are working to undermine state-level institutions  
at every opportunity and are continuing to advance their  
nationalist policy both in rhetoric and in practice.

ENGLISH